

Message Text

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10/51

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 INRE-00 SSO-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9574

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DACCA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

CMCONSUL BOMBAY IMMEDIATE 8728

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL MADRAS IMMEDIATE

USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 8668

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

SUBJ: CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

1. THE SHOCK AND SURPRISE PREVALENT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE
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PRESIDENT'S JUNE 26 EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION IN THE CAPITAL HAVE

GIVEN WAY TO A MOOD OF UNEASE AND UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHAT WILL COME NEXT. JOURNALISTS AND EDITORS ARE GLOOMY AND RESENTFUL ABOUT PRE-CENSORSHIP, AND WORRIED THAT THERE MAY NOT BE A RETURN TO A FREE PRESS. IN THIS CONNECTION, CONGEN MADRAS REPORTS THAT IT HAS BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED THAT ONE OF MRS. GANDHI'S CLOSE CONFIDANTS AND TROUBLE-SHOOTER G. PARTHASARATHY CALLED HINDU EDITOR BALARAMAN JUNE 28 TO REQUEST HIM TO ACCEPT THE POSITION OF CHIEF PRESS OFFICER FOR THE GOI. BALARAMAN DECLINED, PARTLY ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WOULD HARDLY BE WORTHWHILE TO MOVE TO DELHI FOR TWO MONTHS. PARTHASARATHY RESPONDED THAT THE CENSORSHIP PERIOD WOULD EXTEND BEYOND THE TWO-MONTH PERIOD.

2. THERE CONTINUES TO BE SLIPPAGE IN CENSORSHIP. ONE CRITICAL COMMENT SURFACED IN THE JUNE 28 TIMES OF INDIA OBITUARY COLUMN THAT READS: "DEMOCRACY - D.E.M. BELOVED HUSBAND OF T. RUTH, LOVING FATHER OF L.I. BERTIE, BROTHER OF FAITH, HOPE, JUSTICE, EXPIRED ON 26TH JUNE." ACCORDING TO A TIMES SUB-EDITOR IN BOMBAY, POLICE AUTHORITIES MADE AN UNSUCCESSFUL INQUIRY INTO THE AUTHORSHIP.

3. CONGRESSMEN ARE GENERALLY DESPONDENT. CONGRESS MPS TELL US PRIVATELY THAT THEY ARE UNHAPPY, BUT THERE IS LITTLE THEY CAN DO FOR FEAR OF SUFFERING THE SAME FATE AS THEIR FORMER CONGRESS COLLEAGUES, CHANDERSHAKER, RAM DHAN AND MOHAN DHARIA, WHO ARE NOW IN JAIL. MRS. GANDHI HAS EFFECTIVELY CHECKMATED INTRA-PARTY DISSENT THROUGH THE EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION. CONGRESS MPS SAY THEY WILL CONTINUE TO SIGN PETITIONS AND TO DELIVER SPEECHES SUPPORTING MRS. GANDHI, HOPING THAT MOST OF THE POLITICAL REWARDS THEY ENJOYED AS PARLIAMENTARIANS IN THE PAST WILL CONTINUE AND PERHAPS, SOME CLAIM, MRS. GANDHI IS REALLY SINCERE ABOUT ENDING THE EMERGENCY. ONE SENIOR AND RESPECTED SUPREME COURT ADVOCATE CLAIMS PRIVATELY THAT THE SUPREME COURT BENCH HEARING MRS GANDHI'S CASE MAY NOW BE MORE INCLINED TO FAVOR HER POSITION IN ORDER TO SALVAGE AS MUCH OF THE COURT'S INDEPENDENCE AS POSSIBLE. A NEGATIVE DECISION WOULD NOT RESULT IN PENALIZING MRS GANDHI; RATHER, IT WOULD ACCELERATE HER MOVEMENT TOWARD AUTHORITARIANISM. CONCURRENTLY, THE ADVOCATE SAID, IT WOULD HASTEN

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THE DECLINE OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA, INCLUDING JUDICIAL FREEDOM.

4. THE EMERGENCY AND THE NEWS BLACKOUT IMPOSED BY CENSORSHIP HAVE ENLIVENED THE DELHI RUMOR MILL. CAPITAL COCKTAIL CIRCUIT AND PRIVATE DINNER PARTIES BUZZ WITH UNSUBSTANTIATED STORIES ABOUT TROOP MOVEMENTS (UNTURE), THE ARREST OF GENERALS (UNTURE), HUNGER STRIKES BY J.P.G.W

NARAYAN AND MORAJI DESAI (UNKNOWN), THE TRANSFER OF J.P. NARAYAN TO A LOCAL DELHI HOSPITAL (POSSIBLY TURE), AND THE CONFINEMENT OF CABINET MINISTERS BELIEVED TO BE OPPOSED TO THE EMERGENCY (UNTURE). CENSORED PRESS REPORTS FED TO THE CAPITAL'S NEWSPAPERS CARRY "NO COMMENT" OR OUTRIGHT DENIALS BY THE GOI'S PRESS SPOKESMAN.

5. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED TO US BY THE CONSULATES GENERAL AND OUR OWN SOURCES LEADS US TO CONCLUDE THAT SPORADIC VIOLENCE IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY IS CONTINUING, MOST NOTABLY IN BIHAR AND GUJARAT, BUT THAT THERE IS ALMOST NO LIKELIHOOD IT WILL SPREAD WIDELY. ALL THREE CONGENS REPORT THAT THE NON-CIP OPPOSITION HAS SO FAR FAILED TO MOUNT ANY EFFECTIVE PROTEST. IN CALCUTTA, MANY PROMINENT CPM FIGURES ARE STILL IN HIDING. THE GOI PRESS SPOKESMAN ON JUNE 29 TOLD REPORTERS THAT ARRESTS HAVE NOW CLIMBED TO "OVER 900" WHILE DECLINING TO GIVE EXACT FIGURES. THE DELHI PRESS JUNE 29 CARRIED A FIGURE OF OVER 400 ARRESTS FOR UTTAR PRADESH, WHICH ALONE WOULD BRING THE TOTAL TO OVER 1300. HE DID OFFER THAT ONLY 15 PERCENT OF THOSE DETAINED HAVE BEEN ARRESTED UNDER MISA, INDICATING THAT THE GREAT BULK OF THOSE JAILED WERE APPREHENDED FOR DEMONSTRATING AGAINST THE EMERGENCY. MOST OF THE OFFICE BEARERS OF THE JANA SANGH DOMINATED DELHI UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION HAVE BEEN ARRESTED. CONGRESS-O LEADER K. KAMARAJ ADDRESSED LARGE PUBLIC MEETINGS IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF MADRAS JUNE 28. HE CGOTICIZED THE EMERGENCY AND STATED ARRESTS WERE UNJUSTIFIED. THE DMK NEWSPAPERS WERE CONTINUING (AS OF JUNE 30) TO CRITICIZE THE EMERGENCY IN EDITORIALS AND RTAMPOON THE PRIME MINISTER IN CARTOONS.

6. IN NEW DELHI, A DEMONSTRATION WAS BROKEN UP BY THE POLICE JUNE 29, AND THE JANA SANGH LEADER, THE MAHARANI
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OF GWALIOR ARRESTED. AN AMERICAN REPORTER AT THE SCENE TOLD US THAT 70 PEOPLE WERE DETAINED BY POLICE. FOR THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, HEAVY POLICE GUARDS HAVE LINED THE ROADS LEADING TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL KNOWLEDGEABLE SURCES, THE GOI HAS ARRESTED A GROUP OF J.P. NARAYAN SUPPORTERS WHO HAVE BEEN PASTING ANTI-INDIRA GANDHI POSTERS ON WALLS IN OLD AND NEW DELHI. THE GOI HAS REPORTEDLY CLOSED DOWN TWO VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS IN THE CAPITAL.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 INRE-00 SSO-00

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

7. ON JUNE 28, WHAT THE GOI HAS DESCRIBED AS AN OPPOSITION-SPONSORED "ACT OF SABOTAGE" RESULTED IN A FIRE AT THE AIR TELEVISION STUDIO IN NEW DELHI. THE GOI SPOKESMAN PLAYED DOWN THE DAMAGE AT A JUNE 29 PRESS CONFERENCE. AN INDIAN WHO WAS ABLE TO VISIT THE BUILDING JUST AFTER THE FIRE TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT THE STUDIO WAS COMPLETELY BURNT OUT. AIR T.V. REMAINS ON THE AIR, HOWEVER.

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8. MRS GANDHI HAS YET TO UNFOLD HER ECONOMIC POLICY PACKAGE. AT LEAST THREE STATE GOVERNMENTS HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT DIR WILL BE USED MORE LIBERALLY AGAINST HOARDERS AND BLACK MARKETEERS. IN DELHI AND MADHYA PRADESH, SHOPKEEPERS HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO POST THEIR PRICES AND STOCK LIST WITHIN THREE DAYS. AGRICULTURE MINISTER JAGJIVAN RAM IN A RADIO INTERVIEW ON JUNE 28 STATED THAT THE NEW POWER UNDER THE EMERGENCY WOULD HELP IN REMOVING THE OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF FOOD PROCUREMENT WHICH IN TURN WOULD HELP IMPROVE THE DISTRIBUTION OF GRAINS TO VULNERABLE SECTIONS OF CONSUMERS. BOTH CONGEN BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA REPORT THAT BIG BUSINESS (I.E., PRINCIPALLY INDUSTRIALISTS) APPEARS TO WELCOME THE EMERGENCY. THEY ANTICIPATE GREATER POLITICAL STABILITY, MORE LABOR DISCIPLINE AND AN ECONOMIC POLICY STRESSING PRODUCTIVITY OVER GOVERNMENT CONTROL.

9. THERE HAVE BEEN ONE OR TWO SCATTERED PRESS REFERENCES TO "FOREIGN POWERS" AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONSPIRACY MRS GANDHI MOVED TO AVERT. THE PRO-CONGRESS PARTY BENGALI LANGUAGE DAILY JUGANTAR JUNE 30 REPORTED THAT THE CONGRESS PARTY'S YOUTH LEADER, P.R. DAS MUNSHI, SAID IN A MEETING OF PARTY CADRES IN CALCUTTA JUNE 29 THAT "WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN FRUSTRATING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE CIA RING AND THE ADVENTURISM OF THE DOMESTIC REACTIONARY FORCES." JUGANTAR SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY PAPER SPECIFICALLY REPORTING DAS MUNSHI'S CIA COMMENT. BASUMATI, A CONGRESS BENGALI LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER, QUOTED HIM AS SAYING "SOME REACTIONARY FORCES WERE OUT TO DESTROY INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WITH

THE HELP OF FOREIGN POWERS.
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